

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 87A-33

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other Williams Tobacco Barn

2. Location

street and number 19070 Poplar Ridge Road not for publication

city, town Brandywine vicinity

county Prince George's

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Cynthia D. & Randolph Williams

street and number 19221 Croom Road telephone

city, town Brandywine state MD zip code 20613-8256

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Land Records Department liber 14988 folio 489

city, town Upper Marlboro tax map 174B4 tax parcel Not Listed tax ID number

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
- ☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- ☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- ☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- ☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
- ☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- ☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	_____ structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	_____ objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	_____ Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory**

7. Description

Inventory No. 87A-33

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

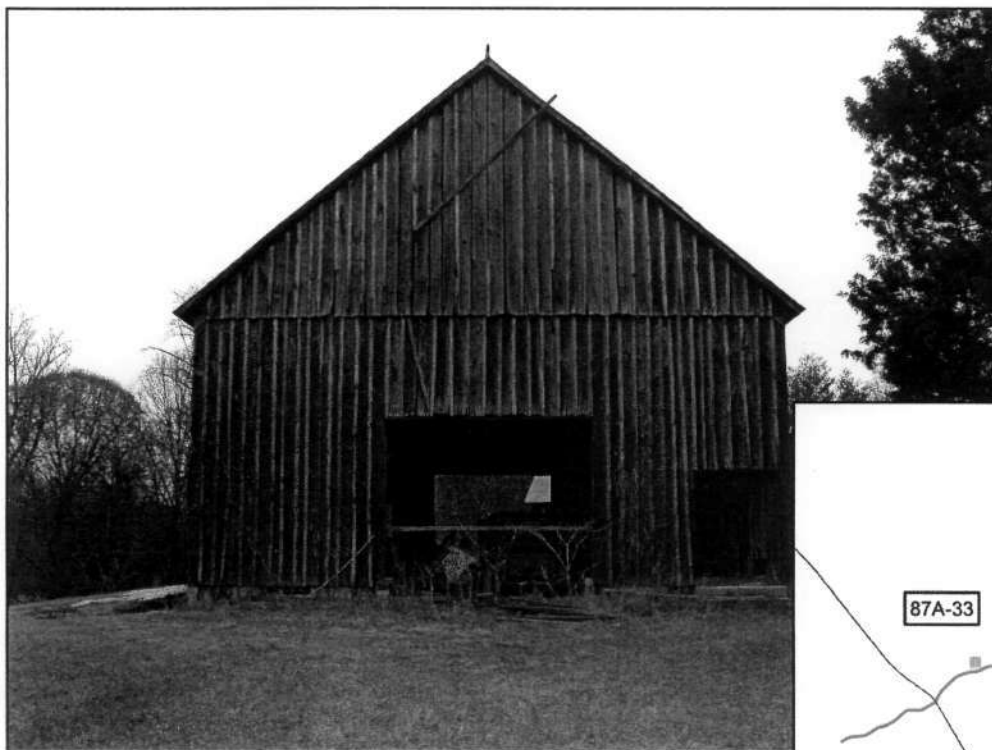
Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Williams Tobacco Barn, built between 1900 and 1930, is sited on a gently sloping grassy hill a few hundred feet north of Croom Road. A small one-story wood-frame building associated with the tobacco barn is positioned to the east of the barn. A wooded area lies east of the wood-frame building. A paved road curves along the western and northern edge of the field providing access to a circa 1890 farmhouse sited to the north of the tobacco barn, as well as to other modern houses. The circa 1890 farmhouse may have once been associated with the Williams Tobacco Barn, but is no longer under the same ownership. The current owners reside in a modern house located to the east of the wooded area and not visible from the tobacco barn.

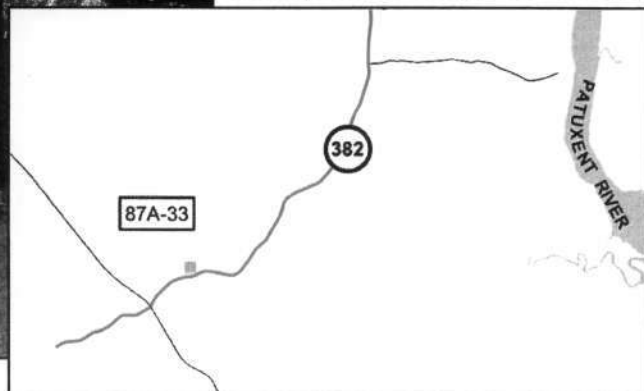
Situated on an east-west axis, the wood-frame tobacco barn rests on a solid parged foundation and is clad in circular sawn board-and-batten on the north, south and west elevations. The east elevation is clad in circular sawn vertical boards. The gable roof is clad in corrugated metal and features open overhanging eaves, which allow air movement through the upper portion of the barn. Four sets of air doors, each with one air door above the other, created from four planks of vertical board line the north and south elevations. These air doors are attached with metal hinges and would have been opened or closed as needed during the air curing process. The gable end elevations (east and west) feature centrally placed openings large enough to allow farm machinery or tractors to enter the barn. The east elevation retains its double-leaf vertical board doors. The doors for the west elevation are no longer in place.

The barn features a central passage with numerous rooms for hanging the tobacco leaves on either side and above the passage. A wood sill rests on the parged foundation and supports the box framing and down braces. Some of the framing elements appear to have been re-used from other barns or buildings. Poles, from which the tobacco leaves would hang while curing, hang between the framing. These poles appear to be fashioned from tree branches and many bear traces of their bark. Full access to the interior of the barn was not granted.

The small wood-frame building, sited to the east of the barn, is one story and two bays wide. It is clad in circular sawn board-and-batten and has a side gable roof covered with standing-seam metal sheets. An exterior-end brick chimney with a corbelled cap is positioned on the south gable. The façade features a single-leaf vertical board door and a double-hung wood sash 6/6-light window.



The nearness of this building to the tobacco barn and the presence of the chimney indicate it may have been used to house workers when they were stripping the tobacco. This process took place in the fall and the heat provided by the chimney would have kept the workers warm. Most farms constructed stripping sheds with small chimneys directly onto the barns in order to avoid paying taxes on additional buildings, so this arrangement is unique for the area.



8. Significance

Inventory No. 87A-33

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1900 - 1930

Architect/Builder

Construction dates 1900 - 1930

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

During the more than two centuries in which tobacco served as the money crop in Prince George's County, planters, indentured servants, slaves, and farmers developed utilitarian structures for tobacco curing and packing that have remained essentially the same to the present day. Early barns were square in plan and constructed of notched logs with open spaces between the logs to permit the circulation of air (a log dwelling had chinking and caulking between the logs to prevent the infiltration of air). Inside, scaffolding held the tobacco sticks with the leaves suspended from them in such a way as to allow air to flow over the drying tobacco to prevent mold. Farmers employing the fire-curing method lit small fires on the barn's earthen floor to lower the relative humidity (Percy 1979:33). The Prince George's County barns differed from those constructed in Virginia and North Carolina for the flue curing of bright-leaf tobacco, which employed a stove or firebox with a flue and require a different type of barn—one that was essentially airtight to hold the heat. By the 19th century, the increasing availability of sawn lumber enabled southern Maryland's farmers to construct timber-frame tobacco barns covered with wooden siding, usually vertical board siding. Southern Maryland's air cured tobacco utilized barns constructed with air doors along the sides that could be opened to facilitate the circulation of air. These air doors were three or four vertical boards fastened together and usually hinged that could be opened.

The earliest tobacco barns identified in the survey along Croom Road are the ca. 1820 Duvall Tobacco Barn (87A-31) and the 1800-1830 Watson Tobacco Barn (87A-55) and the most recent barns date to the middle of the twentieth century such as the Stielper (87A-48), Jackson (87A-47), and Chase (87A-44) tobacco barns. Although the dates of construction for the surveyed barns range over one hundred and thirty years, the construction materials, methods of construction, and form of the tobacco barn changed very little. All of the barns surveyed are wood-frame and clad in vertical boards; all of the barns contain four-foot by four-foot rooms to hang the tobacco; and all of the barns have hinged vertical board air doors to control the circulation of air within the barns. The changes in form are very minor but provide the most insight into the date of construction. Early nineteenth century barns have steeply pitched gable roofs. From about 1830 until 1900 the barns have more standardized gable roofs, sometimes with one side of the gable extended to create a shed roof over a stripping room. Around 1900, the use of tractors increased in Prince George's County and central double-leaf doors opening onto a wide central passage began to appear in the barn. The final form change was the advent of the gambrel roof, which created more space within the barn to hang tobacco. Gambrel roofs began to appear in the 1930s and 1940s.

At the turn of the 20th century the tobacco farmers of Prince George's County shifted to mechanization. This shift is evident in the tobacco barns of this period which feature central passages large enough for tractors or other machinery to enter. The Williams' Tobacco barn is an example of a turn of the 20th century tobacco barn in Prince George's County, Maryland and fits into the third period of tobacco barn construction. The barn is currently deteriorating due to neglect as tobacco is no longer being cultivated on the land associated with this barn.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. 87A-33

David O. Percy, *The Production of Tobacco Along the Colonial Potomac. The National Colonial Farm Research Report No. 1, Agricultural History Series* (Accokeek, Md.: The Accokeek Foundation, 1979), 10-11.]

National Register of Historic Places, Red Fox Farm, Mecklenburg Co., Va., File 58-131, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Calvert County Historic District Commission, "Tobacco Barns Calvert County Maryland," Prince Frederick, Md: Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1991), brochure.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 3.9693

Acreage of historical setting

Quadrangle name

Quadrangle scale: Lower Marlboro

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	J. Shafagoj, Architectural Historian		
organization	Ashley Neville, LLC	date	March 1, 2006
street & number	11311 Cedar Lane	telephone	804.798.2124
city or town	Glen Allen	state	VA

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

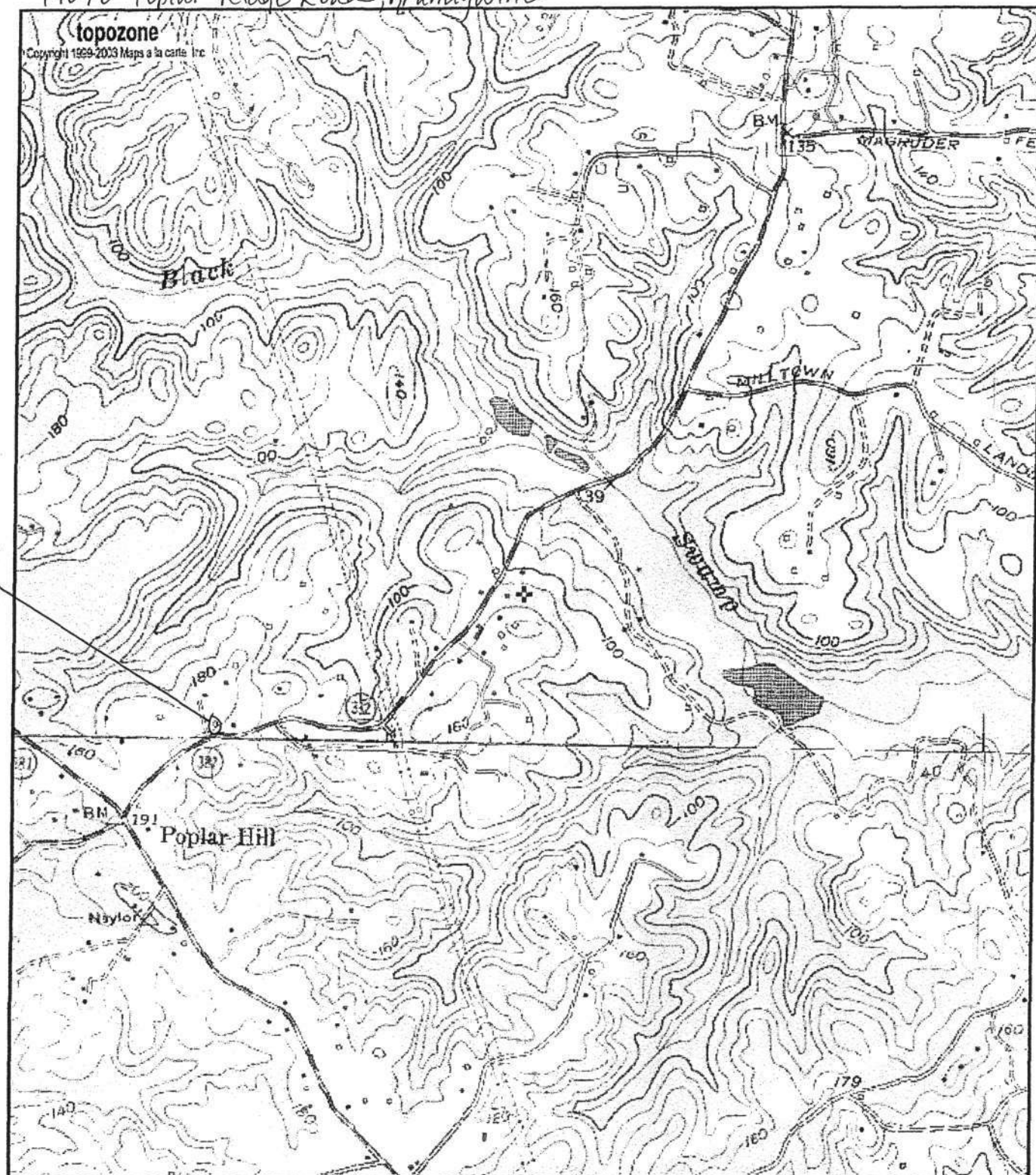
return to:

Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Williams Tobacco Barn

19070 Poplar Ridge Road, Brandywine

PG:
87A-33



UTM 18 349788E 4277087N (NAD83/WGS84)

USGS Lower Marlboro (MD) Quadrangle

Projection is UTM Zone 18 NAD83 Datum

M=-10.97

G=-1.078